

GREAT SPEECH

-- BY --

HON. GEO. W. ROSS

PREMIER OF ONTARIO

DELIVERED AT WHITBY, NOVEMBER, 1899.

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In reply to the address, Hon. Mr. Ross, who was received with loud cheers on rising, said :—" Mr. President, members of the executive, ladies and gentlemen : I thank you very sincerely indeed for this very complimentary address. You have estimated my talents and attainments, I fear, far too high. True, I have had a lengthened experience in public life in connection with the House of Commons and with the Legislative Assembly. While I do not think in my judgment I have reached that lofty pinnacle on which, through your kindness of heart, you have placed me, I thank you, nevertheless, for the kind words you have spoken of my career. I sincerely trust that you will find the Liberal party continuing to uphold the honor of the country with the same earnestness and zeal under my leadership as it has done under the leadership of my pre-

decessors. I have not an easy task before me. Those whom I follow were such men as the Hon. Edward Blake, Sir Oliver Mowat, and the Hon. A. S. Hardy, men of talent, of great experience and of high character, and to follow in their footsteps is no easy task. (Applause.) Allow me first to express my sincere regret on the retirement of my predecessor, the Hon. Mr. Hardy, who for twenty-six years was a conspicuous figure in the Legislative Assembly of his native Province. Mr. Hardy was pre-eminently a Canadian, with a strong strain of United Empire Loyalist blood in his veins—a very good strain, as we all know, by which to make Canadian blood, if possible, more thoroughly British. Mr. Hardy gave the full vigor of his manhood to the service of his country, and as the administrator at different periods of three important portfolios, established beyond cavil his capacity as an administrator and as a legislator. For sixteen years I had the honor of being associated with him in the Government, and I can truthfully say that for resourcefulness, regard for the public interests, and integrity as an officer of State, he deserves to rank with the best men ever called to serve her Majesty as one of her executive counsellors. (Applause). The failure of his health is not a loss to the party simply, but a great public loss, a loss to Ontario, a loss to Canada. To hold him in grateful remembrance as a large-hearted and progressive public servant should be the duty not only of every liberal in the Province but of every Canadian who appreciates loyalty and fidelity in the discharge of public duties. (Cheers.)

Forming the Government.

On the retirement of Mr. Hardy and by right of his advice I was called by His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, to form a new Government. To be called to the leadership of the Liberal party of a great Province like Ontario is no ordinary distinction, and yet when I reflect upon the high standing and pre-eminent abilities of my predecessors you will not charge me with using terms of self-abasement when I say that I would readily have allowed the honor to pass by were it not for the assurances of my colleagues in the

Government and in the House that the call was one which commanded their heartiest approval. And now, having formed a Government, as required by the constitution of the Province, I may say without any undue feelings of exultation that the wider public opinion, which I was unable to consult at the time, has, with a unanimity and cordiality far beyond my expectations, justified my more immediate advisers in the support so kindly proffered at the outset. (Applause.) More than this, I have reason to believe that many who consider themselves comparatively free from the acknowledged obligations of party ties look upon my accession to the leadership with considerable favor.

Portfolios Exchanged.

You have already been informed through the public press of the composition of the new Government. I say new Government, because in a business sense, with one exception, every portfolio has been changed. You have a new Attorney-General, a new Commissioner of Crown Lands, a new Commissioner of Public Works, a new Provincial Secretary, a new Treasurer, a new Minister of Education and a new leader of the Government. The only man whose portfolio was not changed was the Minister of Agriculture. (Cheers.) His long experience in that department, his eminent fitness as a practical farmer and his administrative ability have pointed him out as the best available man for that position, and we have taken him accordingly. (Renewed cheers.) I thank you to-day for the very cordial nomination of Mr. Dryden as the candidate in South Ontario, and I believe he will be elected.

As to the personnel of the new Government, very little may be said. They are all, or nearly all, trained legislators and eminently successful in their various spheres in life. The Hon. Mr. Gibson brings to his position legal attainments that command the respect of the whole profession. The ability with which he administered the two departments of the public service which he previously held is a guarantee of success in his new position. The Minister of Education, the Hon. Mr. Harcourt, as a teacher, inspector and a graduate

of our Provincial university, as well as by experience as a Parliamentarian, cannot fail to be acceptable to the teaching profession and the public generally. The Commissioner of Crown Lands, the Hon. Mr. Davis, has shown in the successful management of his own business and as Provincial Secretary that he is a man of judgment and capacity.

The New Ministers.

With regard to the Ministers who hold a portfolio for a first time, a word or two will suffice. Hon. Mr. Stratton, the new Provincial Secretary, has held a seat in Parliament since 1886, and has taken an active part in discussions in the House and in committee work. As a business man he has been most successful and will undoubtedly prove an able and honest administrator. The other new Minister, the Hon. Mr. Latchford, to whom I have assigned the portfolio of Public Works, though new to Parliamentary life, has for some years been regarded as well fitted for the distinction just conferred upon him. Of Irish extraction, Canadian born, educated at Ottawa University, able to speak French or English with facility, a trained lawyer and a man of high character, no one who knows him will doubt his fitness for his new position. My only regret in calling him to the Government was that it involved the retirement of Mr. Harty from the active duties of a department which he filled to the complete satisfaction of his colleagues and of Parliament, and from which under no circumstances would he be permitted to retire did his health warrant his continuance in office. That his ripe judgment and business aptitude might not be entirely lost to us, I have asked him to retain his seat in the Cabinet, and I am glad to be able to say that he has assented to this request.

From Log School to Premier.

As to myself, one of the greatest regrets I have in assuming the leadership of the party is that it necessitated my severance,

directly at least, from the educational work, from which I have taken so much pleasure, and in which, in one form or another, I had been engaged from my early experience as a teacher in a log school-house down to the day I was called upon to form a Government. If I did not repay the log schoolhouse, while Minister of Education, for what it did for me, I hope to square the account before my leadership comes to a close. (Loud applause.)

From this preliminary statement you have an idea of how a Government is formed, and what a simple matter it is when constitutional usages are strictly followed to transfer the Government of the country from one leader to another, and to rearrange the whole Cabinet. There was a time in the history of Canada—thanks to the Liberal party that it is now almost ancient history—when such changes could not have been accomplished without the most perilous agitation.

Victories to be Won.

Now, we are entering upon a pretty extensive campaign as a new Government. Some of my opponents thought I would not have the courage to face the music. We have courage as Liberals to face anything if we know we are right. (Cheers.) We have courage as Liberals to stand by the policy of the party, no matter how numerous their foes may be. It is not in the nature of the Liberal party to shrink from difficulties. We have, for instance, this South Riding of Ontario to dispose of. That will be done very soon. We have a contest in West Elgin. That is easy; we have a Liberal majority there; all we have to do is to poll it. We will have another contest in East Elgin; for since I came upon this platform I have received a message that the Court of Appeal has opened the constituency. This will give another seat I expect, and so we hope to go on conquering, and to conquer, until we have a Government strong enough to legislate for this country as I am sure the Liberals of Ontario desire to be legislated for.

Electoral Corruption.

Now, I would suppose from some observations made here and from what I notice in the press that the Conservative party intend to make this a campaign in which the principal stock in trade will be the alleged corruption of the Liberal party. Such a campaign in my judgment would neither be savoury nor instructive, and I do not propose as leader of the Government to occupy much time in retailing political scandals nor dwelling upon the weaknesses of either party. I think there are more important matters to consider. Not that I fear a comparison of the record of the Liberal party with that of the Conservative party. Our career is pure and clean compared with the record of our opponents. Nevertheless it is our business, as a party, to see that our own skirts are clean, and simply say to the Conservatives, "Go ye and do likewise."

Punish the Guilty.

Now let me tell you what we propose to do. As already announced, it will be our first duty to proceed against those reported by the Judges for corrupt practices. Instructions have already been issued to that effect, and so far as we are concerned the strong arm of the law will be allowed to reach out for Liberal and Conservative alike. In thus invoking the courts to punish offences of this kind we are not following precedents but rather making precedents. For instance, in 1886 eleven persons were reported for corrupt practices. In 1890 seven persons were reported after election trials for corrupt practices, and in 1895 six persons were also reported. That is, in the three general elections antecedent to the elections of 1898, the Judges reported certain persons for corrupt practices, and in most cases the majority of such persons were reported in connection with the unseating of a Conservative candidate. No action was taken in any one of these cases; it remained for the Liberal party in power at the present time to take the first step that has ever been taken to deal through the constituted courts of the land with irregularities in connection with elections. As a Liberal Government, we claim credit for this. It is an earnest that the Liberal party is disposed to have purity of elections; and I ask you: "Did you ever hear of a case where the Conservative party at Ottawa, although I can give you name after name of persons reported by the Judges in the various election trials in the Dominion, where the leader of the Conservative party, whether Sir John Mac-

donald, or Sir John Thompson, or Sir John Abbott, or Sir Mackenzie Bowell, or Sir Charles Tupper, took action against any person reported for corrupt practices in Dominion elections?" Now, if the Conservative party was so determined to eradicate these irregularities, why do they not give us some evidence of their sincerity. I will not allow any man to say that the Liberal party is a corrupt party. In comparison with the Conservative party the Liberal party is certainly not corrupt, and that I say without attempting in the slightest degree to condone or justify any irregularity in our own ranks. That we cannot do—we cannot be true Liberals and do that. (Applause.)

A History of Purity.

Let me give you two or three illustrations on this point. Which is the party that from time immemorial, I may say, advocated, in Parliament and out of Parliament, the holding of elections on one day? There may be men here who remember when an election lasted a week, and who know the consequences. I remember when elections continued two days. In 1867 that was the law, and every house of refreshment was open, and food and drink were furnished free to the electors, and there were open and frequent irregularities in connection with all those elections. Who was it that contended for the elections to be held on one day? Was it not the Liberal party. Then we contended for trial of controverted elections before the Judges of the country. The old way of trying an election case was before a committee of the House of Commons, and men have been known to hold seats for two years who at the end of that time were found to have no right to them. Well-known examples of this are the Russell case and the Quebec case. Who was it that opposed that mode of trying election cases? Was it not the Liberal party.

Then we contended for election by ballot in order that no man's independence might be imposed upon, that, for instance, an employer might not coerce his employees. The whole history of elections from the beginning of constitutional government in Canada down to the present time shows that the Liberal party are the opponents of corrupt practices and the advocates of pure elections, of perfect independence on the part of the voter and a fair trial for the candidate if his election is contested. So with this history at our backs we will not allow our opponents to say that the Liberal party is not, historically and actually and at the present day, the party of purity in elections. (Hear, hear.)

55,000 Officers.

Another illustration. Since 1867 there have been 927 elections in the Province of Ontario. For these elections there have been appointed by the Crown, mostly by the Liberal party, 927 returning officers. Out of these 927 returning officers appointed by the Liberal Government not one has to this hour been reported as having been guilty of any corrupt irregularity or having used his position to favor the Government candidate, and no evidence has been given in court to sustain a suspicion of such a thing. Compare this record with that of the other side if you want to go into details. Now, take the deputy returning officers, 30 in each constituency, or 27,000 in all, and 27,000 poll clerks. No fewer than 55,000 officers in the last 33 years have been employed in Ontario, appointed by the returning officers mainly from the Liberal party, and there has been no suspicion against these deputy returning officers. How does that compare with what is on record as to the conduct of the other side? I mention these strong substantial facts because it has been suggested that in the past, by malice aforethought, or by arrangement with the Government, the officers of the Crown have been used to aid the Liberal party. If that were so, then it could be said that the Liberal party is corrupt. No Government that ever existed can suppress or eradicate human perversity, but it is a proud boast, and I make it with feelings of true generous satisfaction, that our officers have been impartial and faithful to their trust and that without a single exception to the contrary.

West Elgin Commission.

Take the next point. We determined at the first meeting after the Government was formed, to issue a Royal Commission to inquire into the irregularities in the West Elgin election. This too is the first case where any Government in Canada proposed to enquire into election frauds in which its own friends were said to be concerned. Greater irregularities occurred in other places under the Dominion Government, greater irregularities occurred in the Manitoba election, but did you ever hear of the late Dominion Government appointing a Royal Commission to inquire into an election of their own? It means that the Liberal party in Ontario with the public opinion of the whole party behind them, are determined to invoke the strong hand of the law, and by proper investigation put a stop to irregularities. Mr. Whitney will have a good

deal to say here to-morrow night about corrupt practices. At Arnprior he scouts the idea of this commission being of any use. For a number of months the Conservative party has been anxious to have a commission. We have decided to appoint a commission, and now he speaks of that commission in the most offensive terms. He is reported in the Mail and Empire of to-day as saying "The commission to investigate the election scandals was a farce, and an impartial decision was not to be looked for."

Rough on the Judges.

The commission has not yet been appointed, ladies and gentlemen. We announced that it was to be a commission of Judges. Mr. Whitney is kind enough to say that a commission of Judges will be a farce. That is his estimation of the Judges; that an impartial decision is not to be looked for. I want Mr. Whitney to explain that when he comes here to-morrow night. It is the first time in the history of this country that a leader of any party has cast such a reflection on the Judges on the bench. We have a similar reflection cast by him in reference to the unseating of Mr. Calder. He says that was a Grit conspiracy, put up for the purpose of unseating Mr. Calder. We thought it was the Judges who unseated him. When a Conservative is unseated it is a Grit conspiracy. Was it a Conservative conspiracy that unseated Mr. Breithaupt in Waterloo? Some people thought it was, that the evidence indicated that, but we do not take that ground; but we say we are going to give a commission that will investigate these matters in a disinterested, honest and fair-minded way. We don't believe the Judges will allow themselves to be associated with anything farcical.

The judges of Ontario have not so far played the partizan and we have no fear that they shall do so in this case.

The Programme.

Having disposed of election matters, what do we propose? What is our policy on public questions? I suppose you are very anxious to know what the new Government are going to do. Well, we hope to do many things, some not altogether a departure in any special sense, but others more specifically outlined than heretofore.

First, then, it is proposed that we shall have a commission to ascertain the financial position of the Province. It has fallen to my lot, in the adjustment of portfolios, to take the Treasury Department. Since Confederation the Treasury Department has spent one hundred millions of money. We have a revenue of between \$3,000,000 and \$4,000,000, and we spend about all we receive, although some people say we spend more. I want to know how our finances stand. Our opponents say we have never had a proper audit. I do not believe that. We have an Auditor who is not an officer of the Government, but an officer of the Legislature, and who, presumably, does not pay a single dollar for any purpose unless the expenditure is authorized by the House. I believe our Auditor has faithfully discharged his duty. Then there is a Public Accounts Committee of the Legislature that has authority to call for every account, every check and every bill, and to examine witnesses under oath as to whether certain goods were sold and whether a certain amount of money was received for them. That committee sits for four or five weeks each session. The strongest men in the Conservative ranks are members of it, and they examine the public accounts very carefully. But still our Conservative friends say they do not know how the accounts stand, and perhaps they do not. (Laughter.) Perhaps they are not good accountants. I propose to remove that complaint from them, and with the consent of my colleagues to appoint three of the most distinguished financiers in the City of Toronto to examine the public accounts since Confederation. These gentlemen are: Dr. Hoskin, President of the Toronto General Trusts Company; Mr. B. E. Walker, Manager of the Bank of Commerce, and Mr. Angus Kirkland, Manager of the Toronto branch of the Bank of Montreal. They will be free to examine the records to their hearts' content, and make a report as to where we stand. When that report is received, I think you will find that our expenditure has not exceeded our revenue. I cannot prejudge the matter, except as a Parliamentary familiar with the public accounts, but I think you will find we have kept within the revenue of the Province fairly well. I think you will also find that this Province is not in debt, as our Conservative friends say it is. (Applause.) It is a remarkable thing, that of all the Provinces of the Dominion Ontario seems to be the only one that has escaped a large burden of indebtedness. For instance, the Province of Quebec has a gross debt of \$35,450,548. Nova Scotia, with about half a million of people, has a debt of \$3,711,802; New Brunswick, \$3,198,859; Manitoba, \$5,701,950; British Columbia, \$7,425,262, and Prince Edward Island, \$468,757. We say that the Province of Ontario, although it carries a small

debt, has interest-bearing assets that would discharge these debts at almost a moment's notice, or at any rate a reasonable notice. We have interest-bearing assets amounting to about \$5,000,000. That is a matter on which, probably, these financial men will report. Then we have railway scrip and railway annuities which, if paid at the present moment, would take up about \$3,000,000.

Surplus of Two Millions.

So that if you take our indebtedness at its present value from our assets at their present value we would have at the present moment a surplus of \$2,000,000. That, we believe, is our financial position. (Cheers.)

Our Conservative critics say that is not the case. We maintain they are wrong in that statement. I think it is well that this question should be settled, and I have particular interest in having it settled, as you will observe from what I say as I go along. If Ontario is not in debt, if we have ample resources, I think there are certain things we should do.

Develop New Ontario.

I think we should address ourselves and apply our surplus means to the development of the country—first to the development of New Ontario, and secondly to the development of old Ontario. For instance, if we can afford it, why not give Mr. Dryden more money for the educational work that is carried on by means of Farmers' Institutes, county fairs, dairy schools and agricultural colleges. Little Belgium, much smaller than Ontario, has several agricultural colleges. Belgium, Denmark, and all the central divisions of Europe know that their existence depends practically upon instruction in agriculture and in the education of their artisan classes. If our finances warrant it, why not increase our grants to these institutions, and why not increase our grants to the public and high schools, and our grants for the improvement of roads, and so on? We live in a progressive period. No true Liberal, no true Canadian, will now stand idle with folded hands, neglecting to pay attention to the development of this country; and I propose that the Government, so far as our means will allow, shall apply their energies, so long as they may have the confidence of the people, to the development of this Province. (Applause)

Position of Ontario.

Why do I say that? Ontario is to-day the first Province of the Dominion. It has more weight in the councils of the Dominion than any other Province because of its population and its wealth. Do you want Ontario to shrink into a minor position in the councils of the Dominion, or do you want it to hold its present status? All my colleagues are natives of this Province, or nearly all. We are all of the opinion that if the Dominion is to prosper, then Ontario should prosper all the more, and be the first Province, and lead the other Provinces for all time to come in wealth, political influence and educational activity. (Cheers.) That is the position we propose to take. Now, looking at the map of Ontario, what do you find? You find that Ontario contains 140,000,000 acres, or in round numbers 200,000 square miles. Of that area only 23,000,000 acres, or 45,000 square miles are occupied. In other words, only one-sixth of the area of the Province to-day is actually in the hands of individual owners, leaving practically five-sixths in the hands of the Crown. Only 12,000,000 of the 140,000,000 acres of land in Ontario are under cultivation to-day. Actually, we have scarcely touched the fringe of the great agricultural wealth which this Province possesses. I think it is our duty to see that these latent resources are made available for settlement, are placed within the reach of our sons and daughters, and developed. Some years ago we found that our young men were going to the United States. There are to-day a million Canadians in the adjoining republic. Of these the greater number were natives of Ontario. To-day we are sending our sons to the northwest and to British Columbia, but to that I do not so much object, so long as they remain under the flag. But do we, the people of Ontario, not owe it to ourselves that we make reasonable provision for the settlement of our sons within our own Province, and thus reap the benefit which is brought about by its development? (Applause.)

Railways—Colonization Roads.

As a preliminary step, however, we think it is important that we should make a practical survey of the lands lying north of the Canadian Pacific Railway up towards Hudson Bay. We have 100,000,000 acres of land in that district that have not yet been sur-

veyed or explored. Nobody knows their value agriculturally; nobody knows the timber wealth and mineral resources which they contain. It will be the first duty of the Government when Parliament meets to ask for a reasonable sum of money—\$40,000 or \$50,000 will suffice—to make a preliminary exploration of that magnificent country and see whether it would not be in the interests of Ontario to have that country opened up for settlement. You know Hudson Bay is nearer Toronto a good deal than is Port Arthur, and we might have a port on the northern limit of the Province. Those who are familiar with the internal waterways of the northern half of this continent say that in their opinion the trade route to the Klondike will be by way of Hudson Bay. Be that as it may, I think it is our duty now, as we own that great country to the north of us, to open it up and make available for the settlement of our sons and daughters from the older parts of the Province (Applause.) We shall find out if the lands are any good for agricultural purposes. Beyond question the country possesses great timber wealth, and we believe minerals will be found there also. We propose, as in the earliest days of settlement in Ontario, to build trunk colonization roads into those parts of the country which we know to be good for settlement, and my argument is, it will be far more profitable for the people of South Ontario to sit down and consider the propriety and the desirability of developing the waste resources of the Province than to indulge in discussions as to the relative political purity of the two great parties. One gives you satisfactory results; the other leaves nothing but heartburnings and political animosities, and makes you feel you are less a man than you would be if you were discharging your duty to the Province. So much in relation to the development of new Ontario on the lines I have indicated.

Question of Land Grants.

There is another question which will come up at a very early date, and that is how we are going to open up the country to the north. Supposing that we have not the money with which to do it, shall we apply towards the construction of these railways a certain proportion of the waste lands of the Province? Some people say no land grants should be made to railways. I admit this is an important question, and I shall be very glad if you discuss it during the next election. We have already given in Canada over thirty-nine millions of acres of land for railway purposes. The

main line of the Canadian Pacific Railway received 18,200,000 acres of land. That is a very large amount, and I do not suppose that any Conservative is prepared to say that Sir John Macdonald was at fault when he recommended such a large grant of land for the construction of the C. P. R. We had not money enough at that time with which to build the line, and we supplemented our limited resources by a grant of land. The United States have been very generous also in giving grants of land for railway purposes. I believe that the railways of the United States have received 83,907,673 acres of land, or about four times the land occupied in the Province of Ontario. Some of the States have likewise been very generous. Michigan has given 3,259,708 acres, Wisconsin 3,660,784, Minnesota 8,274,577 acres. Now, the effect of these large grants of land has not been bad. I believe grants of land might be given in such a way as to establish monopolies like that of the old Canada Company, a monopoly from which my native county Middlesex suffered in my early days.

There is no reason, however, why land grants should not be made on condition that if the land is not occupied or disposed of it will revert to the Crown. One thing you may be assured of is that if such grants of land were made; the Government would require the railway company receiving them to concede the most favorable terms in regard to the transportation of settlers and their effects. We certainly would hold in our own hands such control over lands and railways, as we would not lead to the establishment of a monopoly or interfere with the interest of the settler. At the present moment the land is valueless. If a railway is built our land would be valuable, and the railway land would be valuable. Minnesota has increased its population three times as fast as Ontario by the opening up of the country by railways. So has Michigan; so has Wisconsin.

We Want Population.

As the Hon. Joseph Chamberlain said in Canada a few years ago, "what this country wants is population." Timber is of no value compared with population. Wild land is of no value compared with population. If we could put five millions, two millions even, in this Province what a position we could attain to! If we could settle northern Ontario to the same extent as old Ontario we would have nine millions instead of two and a half millions. The object is worthy of the ambition of any Government. I remember

when the Canadian Pacific Railway was constructed that we thought Sir John Macdonald was undertaking a herculean enterprise, one that would crush the country, one far too expensive for the resources of the country. I think perhaps he was right and we were wrong. I think perhaps he builded more wisely than he knew. No one to-day would say that the building of the railway was a mistake. Canada to-day would be weaker in the councils of the empire, would scarcely be a federated Dominion, as it is, were it not for the Pacific Railway. If the lands of the Northwest could properly be used in the construction of the C.P.R. why not use part of the waste lands of Ontario for opening up the northern parts of the Province.

In addition to this we could perhaps afford to spend a reasonable sum of money for railway development. The Dominion Government has spent \$160,623,357 in aid of railways. That is an immense sum. The various Provinces have spent \$33,682,654. Ontario has given about seven millions, Quebec about twelve millions, while the various municipalities, in addition to the Provinces, have given \$18,200,615. In all, Canada has given for railway aid two hundred and twelve million dollars.

The Great Civilizer.

These railways may not always pay a dividend; that is not so much our concern. See how they have opened up the country! See all the towns and villages that are being built everywhere! See how the raw material has been made valuable by the railways! You have burned up on your farms in Ontario county timber that would buy these farms twice over, hardwood that was, perhaps, worth more even than the whole farm was worth. Wherever these railways run they carry the pulpwood, minerals and other raw material to the market, while our produce goes to feed the miner, the lumberman and to assist in building up towns and villages.

Rat Portage, situated among the rocks, with a population of five or six thousand, has to get all its supplies from Winnipeg or the East; so with Port Arthur and Sault Ste. Marie, their supplies coming more from older Ontario. It is only by such a policy we can maintain the position we now occupy as a people, and it is just such a policy as the progressive spirit of this country will respond to. We have had enough of complaints about delays in developing the country, and enough of partisan and political quarrels. I would

be willing to form even a coalition if the development of the country could not be got in any other way. I am confident, however, there is energy enough in the Liberals, and force enough and foresight enough to do this single-handed, and if our opponents will resist we will simply appeal to the people of the Province, with the utmost confidence of their support. (Cheers.)

Developing Old Ontario.

Now, having dealt with New Ontario, what do we propose in old Ontario? Have we any new policy there? And, firstly, I would say that we must endeavor to develop the latent resources of old Ontario by means of the Agricultural Department of the Province. If Mr. Dryden is not prepared to give his whole energies, if he is not prepared to throw all his force into the agricultural development of the Province of Ontario, let me tell you—and it is no secret—I will have to get a new Minister of Agriculture; no doubt about it. The secret of our prosperity is in the development of the agricultural resources of the Province. That is the philosopher's stone, that is the Midas touch which will turn everything into gold. We may have mineral wealth and forest wealth, but the broad foundation of the wealth of this country is its loamy farms and its skilled agriculturists, and you will allow me as an old school master to say that we want to put a skilled, intelligent, well-instructed farmer on every farm in the Province. Mr. Dryden says you must change your methods of farming. You have changed them. We cannot hold our own, we cannot make the most out of the soil, we cannot make the most out of raising stock or raising grain, or raising fruit or dairy products without intelligence, and a still higher degree of intelligence. You all admit that.

To Reclaim Waste Lands.

We ought to deal with the waste lands of the Province. We have in old Ontario three million acres of swamp lands. They are a nuisance, they are pestilential. We hope to project a system whereby these three million acres may be properly drained, and when you drain your swamp lands you restore to the farmer what is the best meadow land he can possibly have. Think of three million acres of swamp lands! If we can change what is to-day

worth three million dollars into property worth thirty millions, don't you think that would be money well spent? Besides this we hope by the methods adopted by Mr. Dryden so to improve the agricultural condition of the people of this country as to get better results even on the same area. Now, I think no man can estimate how much Mr. Dryden's management of the Agricultural Department has added to the wealth of this country. I will give you a figure or two that struck me as effective in some investigations I have made. For instance, in 1888 we sold 4,415,381 pounds of butter to Great Britain, a trifling, insignificant quantity. That was ten years ago. Last year we sold 11,253,787 pounds of butter to Great Britain. This is a very satisfactory increase in ten years. How has this been brought about? By means of the dairy schools, the Farmers' Institutes and through improvement in live stock. In 1888 we sold 84,163,267 pounds of cheese to Great Britain; last year this had risen to 196,703,723 pounds, worth seventeen millions of dollars. Twenty years ago the United States sold more cheese in the British market than we did; now we sell four times as much as all the United States put together. No, we have not been idle. Mr. Whitney will tell you when he comes here to-morrow night that we are corrupt. Does he discuss any of these practical questions to which I have referred with the people of this country? I never heard him express an intelligent idea in regard to agriculture or the development of this country. (Cheers.) You may take his policy from beginning to end, examine it with a microscope, and you will not find a plank on which a full sized man can stand. (Renewed cheers.) It has no existence; it is mere invective, declamation and denunciation. However, you have always substantial proof of the utility of the Department of Agriculture. We propose to aid the farmer in raising more crops on the same quantity of land if skilled agriculture will produce them, and to give him better live stock if a better selection of stock will give it to him; a larger income from every department of agricultural industry than we now have if skill and intelligence will bring it about. That is one thing.

Mr. Whitney Opposes Progress.

Another very important department of work to which attention must be immediately given is the question of transportation. Mr. Dryden deserves unstinted praise for the appointment of a road commissioner to give instruction as to road-making in the Province, and I am bound to say that in all these movements he has received

the active opposition of Mr. Whitney and his allies. In fact, in this great agricultural country, would you believe it, that when Sir Oliver Mowat proposed some years ago the appointment of a Minister of Agriculture Mr. Whitney opposed it? This is the farmer's friend; this is the man who would make this country rich! As if the thousand millions you have invested did not require the guiding hand of one Minister as much as our forests or any other department of State! Then, when we wanted a road commissioner he voted against it. So, that you see, whenever we propose anything progressive you may be sure to find Mr. Whitney and his followers will vote against it, simply because they do not understand the genius of our people or the wants of the Province. How can the farmer reach the markets of the country or sell his products to advantage unless he is provided with proper transportation facilities?

Cold Storage Stations.

In conjunction with our system of transportation I think we might very well consider the establishment of collecting stations, of cold storage stations, where the produce of the farm could be put in cold storage for a convenient time until, perhaps, a suited market is relieved.

In Australia they have cold storage stations, or collecting stations, as they call them, at reasonable intervals, where the farmer places his butter and where it is perfectly safe and preserved until he wishes to sell it or take it out for the use of his family. Poultry is stored in the same way. At certain seasons of the year butter is a glut on the market, and, as a consequence, is sold at half its value. By means of cold storage it could be safely kept till the market was relieved and thus a better price obtained. The same with apples and other fruit. In the fall, the buyer comes to your orchard, he says, "I will give you a dollar a barrel for your apples," that is the market price, and you cannot make better terms with him. You must either sell at the buyer's terms or allow your apples to rot on the ground. By cold storage stations you can bide your own time. This is a matter to which the Government proposes to give its attention, and to follow up, to a certain extent, the action of the Dominion Government in connection with cold storage for creameries.

Transportation.

Another important matter is the transportation of farm products to the English market. We are not connected with getting goods to the English market. The Ontario Government has nothing to do with the control of railways. The control of railways has been taken from us. I was in the House of Commons when that change was made, and I regret that it was made. We want to get into the British market, and I pledge my word as leader of the Government that the Ontario Government will lend all the assistance in its power to encourage the Dominion Government in providing quick and cheap transportation for our produce to England. The Dominion Government cannot afford to turn a deaf ear to our representatives in the Ontario Legislature. When the Ontario Legislature asks they must move, because more than one-half of the influence of this country lies in Ontario. It shall be my early duty to see if there cannot be a reduction of freights to ocean ports on agricultural produce. There ought to be fast express trains that would bring these products, as in the case of Armour ~~meats~~, quickly to the seaport, and thence by an efficient ~~and~~ storage ~~and~~ to the English market.

Chilled Meat Trade.

A word as to cold storage. You send your cattle to England alive. In Australia they have long abandoned that. They send their chilled meat there, and, as a consequence, their trade in this has grown enormously in the last few years. In 1880 the exports to Great Britain were 400 carcasses from Australia. In 1897 the ~~Australians~~ sent 1,394,500 carcasses of chilled mutton to the English market—very nearly a million and a half carcasses. New Zealand in 1897 sent 2,696,000, the Argentine Republic 2,680,000, that is, a total of 6,770,000 carcasses sent by cold storage process across the line via the Suez canal through the heated climate of the Mediterranean and landed at Liverpool or London in perfect preservation. We will see if some means cannot be devised whereby a chilled meat market of that kind cannot be established for the benefit of the farmers of Ontario. There were also 77,000,000 pounds of fresh beef sent in the same way. There are enormous facilities in the Dominion for a trade of that kind if we would only avail ourselves of the advantage.

Let me give you a figure or two to show the extent of the English market for the food products of Canada. Last year, that is 1897, England imported \$6,104,562 worth of horses, and we only sent \$1,364,891 worth. England imported \$50,910,181 worth of cattle, and we only sent \$9,953,350 worth, or one-fifth of the supply. England imported \$4,472,934 worth of sheep, and we only sent \$465,263, or half a million dollars' worth. England imported \$61,075,752 worth of bacon and hams, and we sent of this only \$3,000,000 worth. England imported \$34,065,440 worth of beef, and we only sent \$207,012 worth. England imported \$77,462,329 worth of butter, and we sent only \$2,164,995. England imported 140,317,540 dozen eggs, and we sent only 5,678,690 dozen. England imported 117,115,003 bushels of wheat, and we sent of this only 8,998,267 bushels. Of barley England imported 44,237,013 bushels, of which we sent only 158,597 bushels. Of oats England imported 53,090,668 bushels, of which we sent only 5,780,355 bushels. Of flour England imported 10,461,174 barrels, of which we sent only 857,186 barrels, and of apples England imported 4,199,971 bushels, of which we sent only 1,020,929 bushels. Out of \$855,987,300 imported into England, Canada sent only \$62,125,056 of these products. That is to say, John Bull bought in Canada only $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the breadstuffs which he consumed, the other $92\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. he bought in the United States and other countries. So that we have by cheap transportation and such opportunities as lie in our hands for opening up trade with the English market, facilities to develop to any extent we please the native energy of the people of the Province. That is one way in which we propose to develop old Ontario.

To be Made in Ontario.

I will tell you another way. We propose so far as we can to insist that all the raw material of Ontario shall be manufactured in Ontario. For instance, after a great deal of trouble we succeeded in getting through the House an amendment to the Act respecting the sale of timber which requires now that all logs cut on Government lands be manufactured into lumber in the Province of Ontario. That is a very good provision, and the effect of it is apparent even now. There have sprung up on the Georgian Bay and on the west side of Ontario large lumbering industries in the way of saw-mills, etc., that had been extinguished owing to circumstances that I need not wait to discuss at this moment. The basis of this movement is

this: that we want to give employment to the people of Ontario in Ontario. The thousands who left Ontario left not because they disliked the Government or the country, but because they could get better employment or better wages in the United States. We want to remedy this. We want to take the lumber, copper, nickel, all our mineral wealth and all our raw material and see if we cannot in some way or another encourage the manufacturing industries in the Province of Ontario. What has built up Sheffield, Manchester, Leeds? Was it not that the merchant marine of England traversed the whole globe and gathered cocoons from the south of France and India, and woods and dyes from various countries and brought them to England, where the skill of the English artisan made them into goods which commanded the approval of the world. We have surely intelligence enough to take our lumber and make it into manufactured goods instead of sending it to the old country and having it manufactured there. We surely have intelligence enough to take our own raw wool and make woollen goods of it. We surely have intelligence enough to convert our wheat into flour, and send the manufactured product abroad, and in the same way why not take our nickel or copper, or iron ore and encourage the manufacture of these into the finished article?

The Iron Industry.

The world's demand for iron amounts to about 36,000,000 tons of pig iron. This is needed to keep the industries of the world humming. How much of this do we produce? Less than 40,000 tons. See what room there is for the development of our mining industries! We consume 140,000 tons of pig iron in Ontario, and produce about 40,000 tons. This Government some years ago proposed a small bounty of one dollar a ton on all iron made of Canadian ore in any place in Ontario. One blast furnace was established in Hamilton, and is now making a considerable quantity of iron out of Canadian ore. We give some assistance to Mr. Rathbun of Deseronto to enable him to make charcoal iron, and last year he made 10,000 tons of iron. This year his output will be much greater. He employs 300 men in the woods cutting wood for the charcoal; a great number of teamsters to haul it to the railway; men at the iron furnaces; and in that way there is a hum of industry about the place that would never have existed but for the encouragement we have given him. Our policy will be in

every reasonable way we possibly can to encourage the manufacture of raw material in order to find employment for our own people and develop the latent resources of the country. We have millions of feet of hardwood in Ontario that would make excellent furniture, and we have iron and corundum, and other minerals that will yield a handsome revenue and employ thousands of people, if only reasonably encouraged.

School Policy.

Two other points I wish to refer to. In education I am unable to propound a new policy. Generally it will be that the children attending the public and separate schools shall receive the particular attention of the Government. I say they have always done so; but if we can exceed the standard of the past we shall do so by more particular attention in the future. I am glad to be able to say that we have raised the separate schools of the Province of Ontario and improved them till they have obtained the same standard now in a general sense as the public schools. That was not done without an effort, and without many reproaches being cast on us by our opponents. But we had the good conscience of the people of this country at our backs, which says that in the eye of the law no creed or nationality shall be deprived of the full privileges of a British citizen because of his creed or nationality.

At this point in Mr. Ross' address, Mr. Jeremiah Long rose in the body of the hall and said: "I must say that so far as your law regarding the school question is concerned it is simply disgraceful."

Hon. Mr. Ross—I would be very glad to give the gentleman an opportunity to ask any questions. That simple observation is very sweeping, and does not mean anything. My contention is that the school laws of Ontario are equal if not superior to the school laws of any Province in the Dominion of Canada. We have proven what our school system is in competition with the school systems of the world at Chicago.

Mr. Long again interrupted, but his words could not be heard at the front of the hall, and he was offered an opportunity to speak at the close of Mr. Ross' address.

The premier continued: What I started to say was that we would make it our special business in the future, as in the past, to

maintain the efficiency of our public and separate schools, because they are the basis of our high schools and higher education. The point I wanted to make, however, is this: that in the line of a general education I think we have gone about as far as we need go. All we need to do is to maintain the efficiency of the teaching profession.

Technical Education.

I do not see that we need any material changes in the course of study or text books, or in our methods of training teachers, but I do see that we ought to make a special effort to introduce into the Province a system of technical education for the training of the artisan classes and the working men of Ontario. I have for many years been endeavoring to arrive at that point. For instance, we made drawing in our schools compulsory, and that is the basis of technical training. That was done fifteen years ago. We have made the teaching of agriculture compulsory in our schools as the basis of agricultural education. But we want something more than that. We want to take the intelligent working man of this Province and in a technical school fit him to be useful in adding skill and intelligence to the value of the raw material in every department of industry. For instance, if you have establishments where high-class furniture is manufactured, you require technical skill in order to enable you to produce it. In all the higher departments of industry, whether it be in weaving, dyeing, woodwork, ironwork, or in ornamental work of any kind, you require technical skill. We have the intelligence, but I doubt whether we have as much of the technical skill as we ought to have, and I hope you will see in this Province in a very short time, as they have in the large cities of the United States and England, a system of technical schools wherein your son, if he does not wish to enter a profession, can obtain the education that will fit him for earning a livelihood in some other department. We want varieties of occupation. We cannot all be professional men, and it would be a pity if we attempted it. We want a variety of industrial pursuits so as to retain our own labor in the natural development of this country. (Applause).

Provincial Rights.

And now I come to my last point. The Government under the new leadership may be depended upon to insist upon the rights

of Ontario, either as against the Dominion Government or against any of the neighboring Provinces. (Cheers.) We are going to be good neighbors with Manitoba on the west and with Quebec on the east, and we are going to do our whole duty as a loyal member of this great confederacy. It has been said that a Conservative Government should prevail in the Province if a Liberal Government rules at Ottawa, the suspicion being that the Provincial Government would surrender some rights of Ontario in order to keep on good terms with the Dominion Government. That is simply a Conservative argument or pretence with a view of alienating the affections of the Liberal party from the Provincial Government. For instance, Quebec was Conservative almost since Confederation, and unfortunately for us, we had a Conservative Government at Ottawa almost since the union of the Provinces. Did you hear any Conservative say in Quebec that one Government should be Liberal and the other should be Conservative in order that the two Administrations might not be alike? No; our friends on the other side of politics will take all that they can get in the way of office and, like Oliver Twist, ask for more. (Laughter and cheers.).

Our contention is that it is possible for Ontario to maintain her integrity and to maintain all her rights intact with a friendly Government at Ottawa if we are loyal to ourselves. In fact, while there was an unfriendly Government at Ottawa we had to fight for our rights. Do you know that we spent nearly \$100,000 on constitutional questions during the last twenty years. Mr. Mackenzie's Government gave us 100,000 square miles of land, known as the disputed territory, by arbitration. Immediately Sir John Macdonald came into power he declined to ratify the award of that arbitration, and we had to fight the matter in the courts until we got to the Privy Council, and there at the foot of the throne our rights were recognized after enormous expense on the part of the Province. (Cheers.) Had there been a friendly Government in power at Ottawa we would have been saved that expense. In the same way an unfriendly Government at Ottawa laid their hands on our tavern licenses, that yield us to-day a revenue of \$300,000, and sought control of those licenses. We do not want Governments at Ottawa that will encroach upon our rights. We do not believe the present Government will do that. I do not need to give you the assurance, but as the question may be raised I want to say as far as the present Government is concerned that every right which Ontario has under the constitution will be preserved. (Cheers.) We ask

for nothing more; we make no demand; we want what the constitution gives us and we will insist upon having it. We shall not need to insist upon having it, for we have confidence that the Government at Ottawa will do justice by us. (Cheers.) That is our position. But we want to go a little further.

Growing Responsibilities.

We want to feel more and more the growing responsibilities upon us—shall I say the growing responsibilities upon the Dominion of Canada, of which Ontario is the most important part? W. T. Stead says in his character sketch of Cecil Rhodes that some men think in parishes, some men think in nations, and some men think in continents. I want the people of Ontario to think as a part of the British Empire, as an integral part of the great empire, whose flag we all recognize, and of whose Queen we are loyal subjects. (Cheers.) Let me say that one of the most pleasant features of my administration as Minister of Education is this fact: that I believe I was able to instil into the half million of school children of the Province a greater love for Ontario, for Canada and for the empire than they previously entertained. (Cheers.) That was done in two ways. When I came in as Minister the history of Canada was not studied in our public schools, except in a desultory way. I made instruction in Canadian history compulsory. The history we had was purely a history of the Province. I organized a committee and placed myself in communication with the Superintendents of Education in all the Provinces, whereby we get a history of the Dominion not only in the schools of Ontario but in those of every Province from the Atlantic to the Pacific. I do not want the people of my native Province to be parochial. (Cheers.)

Future of Canada.

We must rise to a conception of the magnitude of our position as Canadians. Canada as owner of half a continent is destined to have a future, the brilliancy of which and the success of which no one can anticipate. Why, at the beginning of this century the population of the United States was only 5,000,000. Scarcely a hundred years have flown away, and to-day their population is estimated at 75,000,000. In 20, 30 or 40 years what will the popu-

lation of Canada be? It will be just what our energy in developing the latent resources of the country, in encouraging settlement and in improving the social condition of the people will make it. And shall we in the Province of Ontario lag behind and be unfaithful to our duty in this great competition? I would that all Canadians would realize the great possibilities that lie before them. Another thing I did in the same line as that already indicated, was to establish Empire Day, so that on the day preceding Her Majesty's birthday nearly one million children assemble in the schools of Canada—not of Ontario, mind you—and give attention to the history of Canada and to her relations with the British Empire. We have not, shall I say, enough confidence in ourselves. We have not confidence enough in ourselves as Canadians. We are looking to the United States, to the Washingtons, Websters and Lincolns, and seeing in these names the elements of greatness, forgetting that on Canadian soil we have their equals in the Browns, Baldwins, Blakes and Mowats of the present day. (Cheers.) Let us display our loyalty to our own men. Let the children of Canada know that Canadian soil will produce men the equal of any other soil. We think of the great expanse of the United States, forgetting that we have a still greater expanse. We talk of the constitutional development of England, forgetting that we have made even greater development constitutionally than England. There is no land more free, there are no institutions more stable, no people more intelligent than ours. No Premier of any country can properly indulge in greater feelings of pride than I can indulge in, in being the first Minister of this great Province. (Cheers.)

If there is any one feeling in my heart stronger than another it is that I—a native Canadian, educated in her schools, trained in her institutions, having the confidence of a constituency for twenty-seven years, and now apparently having the confidence of the whole Province—shall devote all my energies, not simply to the development of the country, but to the moral improvement of the people. “Righteousness exalteth a nation.” Tennyson says that the limit of a man's greatness is the limit of his moral perception. You cannot make a people nobler in character or purpose than they are in heart or conviction. Let us strengthen the moral foundations of this country, let us purify elections, where they are impure—not elections only, but let us do what we can to purify the whole atmosphere of the country. The way to do this is not by making farcical pretensions as to our virtues, but by living noble, manly lives, as Canadians, and showing to the world and those who come into con-

tact with us that we have convictions founded on the principles of morality. The result will be to secure for Ontario its pre-eminence as the home of an intelligent, well-educated people. The Government will, without any pretensions, without any blowing of trumpets or any exhibition of virtues, go to work as straightforward, honest men, develop the country on the lines I have indicated, and we trust to show to the younger men that we are not unworthy of their confidence. (Loud cheers).

The meeting concluded with cheers for the Queen, the Ross Government and for the Minister of Agriculture.



